



**King County Mental Health Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division
2002 Briefing Paper**

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS SERVICES

BACKGROUND:

The King County Regional Support Network (RSN) has a complex of crisis response and inpatient diversion resources. With recent funding cuts and the inability to offer long-term services to non-Medicaid clients, MHCADSD must develop innovative strategies to further integrate these services to provide the best safety net we can with limited resources. Specific areas for development of crisis services include:

- 1) Assuring that crisis services are appropriate to meet the needs of the person in crisis
- 2) Assuring that crisis services for persons enrolled in outpatient services are easily accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week and are consistent across providers
- 3) Assuring that inpatient diversion activities and resources are integrated into the crisis response system

MHCADSD has initiated a work group consisting of providers and advocates to examine the current array and complexity of crisis and inpatient diversion services and develop recommendations to improve crisis response.

ISSUES/CHALLENGES:

Because of ongoing budget reductions, demands on the crisis system will be increasing:

1. Fewer persons who are not on Medicaid will be able to be served in the outpatient system. The only publicly funded resource available to these people will be crisis services.
2. Inpatient expenditures are rising. The primary avenue for RSN control of inpatient costs is through inpatient diversion and in-community crisis management.

These increased demands, in the face of declining revenues, necessitate increased efficiency and effectiveness.

DATA:

In 2001, 7,066 persons, most of them not enrolled in outpatient services, used specialty crisis or inpatient diversion resources.

RECOMMENDATION/LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

Mental health crisis response services in King County will be competent, coordinated, and efficient for persons enrolled in outpatient services and for persons not enrolled in outpatient services.